SUBMISSION TO THE SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE ON YOUTH

From the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

August 1985

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) welcomes the constitution by the Senate of Canada of this committee to consider a subject of utmost importance to the future of our country, its youth. AUCC appreciates the opportunity to appear before the Special Senate Committee on Youth to discuss the role of the Association and the involvement of its members in the education of young people.

AUCC is a national association of 73 degree-granting institutions. Its membership ranges from large, internationally renowned teaching and research institutions to small undergraduate liberal arts colleges and certain specialized institutions. The Association seeks to serve the common interests of its members, coordinates national initiatives undertaken by its member institutions, and represents the concerns of the university community to the Government of Canada, to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, to the general public and at national and international fora.

In addition to activities on the national level, the Association's International Relations and Scholarship Administration Division oversees and directs inter-university relations with industrialized countries. To this end, it keeps the Canadian university community up to date on developments in international education and facilitates the exchange of both faculty and students. On a contractual basis, the division

administers graduate and undergraduate scholarship and exchange programs on behalf of Canadian and foreign governments and Canadian corporations. It also administers the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan in Canada. The AUCC's International Development Office endeavours to make Canadian universities more aware of international development opportunities and facilitates linkage agreements between Canadian universities and their counterparts in developing countries.

While their size and scope of activities may vary, all AUCC member institutions contribute in important and significant ways to the social, cultural and economic prosperity of their immediate communities, their provinces and the country as a whole. Universities strive to fulfill many mandates, none of which is more central to their purpose than the education of young people. The creation and transmission of knowledge and skills across a broad spectrum of disciplines and professions constitute what may be called the core undertaking of universities. The university provides the best environment to develop fully a student's analytical thinking processes. By promoting the study, analysis and critique of perceived truths, social mores and scientific developments, the university contributes to the intellectual development of its students to the benefit of both the individual and society.

As universities entered the 1960s, demographic projections indicated that many more Canadians would be seeking admission to higher education institutions. This pressure, coupled with growing public endorsement of the value of significant investment in higher education, led to an unprecedented expansion of the university system. The universities responded positively to the challenges of the 1960s and 1970s, principally by providing more places and programs to accommodate the increasing enrolment. Today's challenge is to satisfy demands for an altered mix of degree programs and to maintain a high degree of excellence in all university endeavours. The growth in full-time enrolment from 68.6 thousand in 1950 to 450.5 thousand in 1984 is documented in the total enrolment column of Table 1.

Table 1

Total University Enrolment and Enrolment of Women, Selected Years, 1950-51 to 1983-84

(numbers in thousands)

	UNDERGRADUATE			GRADUATE			TOTAL		
	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%	Total	Women	%
Full-time									
1950-51	64.0	13.9	21.7	4.6	0.7	15.2	68.6	14.6	21.3
1963-64	146.8	42.8	29.2	11.1	1.8	16.2	158.0	44.6	28.2
1973-74	295.0	116.8	39.6	37.1	9.7	26.1	332.1	126.4	38.1
1983-84	397.3	188.3	47.4	53.2	20.1	37.8	450.5	208.4	46.3
Part-time									
1950-51	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1963-64	50.4	19.6	38.9	6.5	1.1	16.9	56.9	20.8	36.6
1973-74	137.7	74.3	54.0	23.5	6.4	27.2	161.1	80.7	50.1
1983-84	244.8	147.5	60.3	33.9	14.9	44.0	278.7	162.4	58.3

Sources: 1950-51: Statistics Canada. Historical compendium of education statistics from Confederation to 1975. Cat. 81-568.

1963-64, 1973-74: Statistics Canada. Education statistics for the seventies, 1979. Cat. 81-569.

1983-84: Statistics Canada. Education in Canada, 1984. Cat. 81-229.

As can be seen from Table 1, women account for an ever-increasing percentage of the student body. Whereas women represented 21.3 per cent of the full-time enrolment in 1950-51, by 1983-84 the percentage had risen to 46.3. In 1982, women received 51 per cent of the bachelor's degrees awarded, 40 per cent of the master's degrees, and 25 per cent of the doctorates. The corresponding percentages in 1971 were 38 per cent, 22 per cent, and 9 per cent.

Although women are mainly registered in traditional fields, full-time female enrolment at the undergraduate level has increased in such non-traditional areas as agriculture, commerce and business administration, engineering and applied sciences, medicine, pharmacy, law, and veterinary medicine. At the

graduate level, full-time female enrolment has increased in such fields of study as agriculture, engineering and applied sciences, and mathematics and physical sciences.

Student demand for university entry has continued to grow despite the levelling off of the total 18-24 age group which now supplies between 75 per cent and 80 per cent of the university student population. While it is projected that this age group will decline over the next ten years, this does not necessarily mean that there will be a corresponding drop in university enrolments. The full-time university participation rate from this age group has been increasing so that by 1983-84 it had reached 13.5 per cent. The participation rate of young Canadians in university education continues to lag significantly behind participation rates in the United States.

Of particular interest is the steady increase in the participation rate of women: over the last five years, it has increased from 10.2 per cent to 12.7 per cent for the 18-24 age group (Table 2).

Table 2

Full-time University Enrolment Related to Population, 1979-80 to 1983-84

		1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84
		%	%	%	%	%
F.T. undergraduate	M	18.9	19.1	19.6	20.6	21.6
related to	F	16.1	16.6	17.6	18.7	20.2
18-21 age group	T	17.5	17.9	18.6	19.7	20.9
F.T. graduate	M	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.6
related to	F	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.8
22-24 age group	T	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7
Total F.T. enrolment	M	12.7	12.9	13.2	13.8	14.4
related to	F	10.2	10.6	11.2	11.8	12.7
18-24 age group	T	11.5	11.7	12.2	12.8	13.5

Source: Statistics Canada. Education in Canada, 1984. Cat. 81-229.

The importance of a university degree for future employment is confirmed by the figures on the unemployment rates by educational attainment. Table 3 shows that for the total population the unemployment rate is 11.3 per cent while the unemployment rate for those with a university degree is only 5.3 per cent .

Table 3

Unemployment Rate by Educational Attainment for 1984, Annual Averages

Educational Attainment	Total Population 15 years and over	Population 15-24 years	Population 25 years and over
0-8 years	13.4	29.2	11.9
High school[1]	13.0	19.5	10.4
Some postsecondary	11.2	14.2	9.5
Postsecondary certificate or diploma	8.4	11.9	7.5
University degree	5.3	10.6	4.9
TOTAL	11.3	17.9	9.3

Source: Statistics Canada. The Labour Force. Cat. 71-001

1 Secondary school completed or some secondary education, but not any postsecondary education

Young graduates can expect to go through a number of careers in their lifetime. Universities will continue to develop the intellectual competence of their students to enable them to respond to a variety of changing demands. There is an obvious need to provide students with skills and knowledge which are marketable. At the same time, it must be recognized that many of the most highly specialized professionals have acquired their first degrees in the humanities or the social or pure sciences. This pattern is strongly preferred to one that involves narrowly focussed professional training immediately following high school graduation. The broad knowledge acquired in these basic disciplines will provide graduates with the necessary foundation and flexibility to enable them to pursue more specialized

educational programs and to make the transition through the several careers many of them can be expected to pursue during the course of their working lives.

The importance for the future of our investment in the education of Canada's young people calls for an increased emphasis on and commitment to the building block of that future - intellectual capital. Attached to these comments is the AUCC Statement on Accessibility which we believe is relevant to the subject under discussion.

Canada's progress in the development of a mature mixed economy, from a resource based to a manufacturing based and ultimately to a service and knowledge based society, will require highly educated and trained citizens. Highly trained manpower is a prerequisite if Canada is to compete in the international market place and keep pace with rapidly changing technologies. To meet the promise which the future so clearly holds, Canada's young citizenry must have finely-honed analytical minds, the leadership skills and the innovative capabilities that will enable the country to develop and prosper, not only into the 1990s but well into the 21st century. The university's role in developing to the maximum the country's human potential will become ever more prominent.

As Canada enters the next century, research, a fundamental function of universities, will contribute to the capital stock of knowledge upon which the country draws in promoting its social, economic and cultural development and will provide the milieu required for the specialized education of future generations of researchers. In addition, research allows us to maintain the level of scholarship necessary to foster excellence in teaching. Canada's universities contribute significantly to the research and development effort of the country through basic research in most fields of study and through their increasing involvement with industry in the application of knowledge. AUCC's Statement on University Research which delineates the

universities' role in the country's research and development effort is attached.

A decade of underfunding of the university system has endangered the quality of the educational experience and has resulted in limiting opportunities except for outstanding students. Students today often do not have the benefit of state of the art equipment and exposure to laboratories and instruction that were available fifteen years ago. Library collections have not been systematically updated and physical plants are in a state of disrepair. The AUCC believes that the adequate funding of Canada's universities is a public priority and a matter of urgent and pressing necessity if young people are to be properly served for the years ahead.

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